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The Cultural Exchange Is Hit

A Journal editorial (Nov. 12), "The Cultural Exchange Program Works at Its Best," overlooked not only the present inherent deficiencies of cultural exchange, but also how a carefully controlled "fissure" within the Iron Curtain has served Soviet expediency.

A cultural exchange program between the Communist and capitalist worlds correlates with Lenin's work, "Proletarian Culture," which states that the sphere of art can be used as a cultural instrument for the transmission, consolidation and triumph of communism. In his report to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February, 1956, Khrushchev urged a U.S.-Soviet "cultural exchange" program. (This was set up in January, 1958 through bilateral agreements.) American advisers stated that Soviet contacts with the U.S. would "broaden" their narrow ideological viewpoint. It would also soften them in their implacable dogmatism. After learning the truth about what America is really like, they would not only correct their erroneous impressions but, consequently, revise their foreign policy towards the U.S. Such views are politically naive; they presuppose that the Soviet leaders suffer from benighted ignorance of America. In reality they are better informed about the U.S. than most Americans. Have we forgotten Khrushchev's remark to C.I.A. chief Allen Dulles that "we both read the same reports"? Then, other advisers suggested that some Soviets would defect, upon seeing America stripped of Soviet propaganda lies. The fact is that those sent to the U.S. are carefully selected. While here they are regimented and watched. Further, even if Soviets wished to defect, few would risk this for fear of reprisals to their family.



Grab Three U.S. Tourists— No Decadent Democracy Beats U.S.

In your editorial you state that the impact of cultural exchange appearances "by far outweighs in human relations whatever handicaps the exchange program involves." Such a viewpoint side-steps the three major drawbacks in cultural exchange. This program's first shortcoming is its one-sidedness. In true (and praiseworthy), democratic fashion, we daily throw open our press, radio and television to Soviet slanders; they jam our broadcasts. We allow Soviet publications to reach the American masses through newsstands and bookstores; the Soviets do not permit Western books and newspapers to reach the Soviet masses. We allowed the Soviets to remove American books from our Moscow exhibition in 1959; the Soviets were given full rein to propagandize us at their N.Y.C. Coliseum exhibition. Can there be bilateral cultural exchange when the Soviet side is given full expression in the U.S., but the American side is suppressed in the U.S.S.R.?

The second disadvantage in cultural exchange is the restraints placed on Westerners in Russia. Their stay must be chaperoned by an Intourist guide. Their visits are supervised to include compulsory, pre-arranged programs as illusion touring

nears is limited and superficial. Moreover, the majority of tourists, not speaking Russian, learn of Russia only through what and how the Intourist guide translates. Now, since the Intourist guides are zealous student Communist Party members, it can be assumed that they will be faithful government employees to their state which controls everything the tourist learns, since all Soviet sources of communication are not only government controlled but follow clearly defined government policies. For this reason, stormy applause for American artists is totally ineffectual. Its effect is fleeting in comparison with government-controlled communications media which daily drum on the theme that America is the enemy. Also, superficial personal contacts between Americans and Russians can never remove, but merely curiously gloss over, the profound and irreconcilable difference between capitalist free enterprise and Communist planned democracy. For these reasons, it happens that many tourists, upon return home, become "innocent" transmission belts for Communist propaganda, since they have got a one-sided picture of Russia revealing only the "radiance, modern achievements, abundance, happiness and beauty of Soviet life."

The third drawback of cultural exchange has been its exploitation to vilify the U.S. Both Moscow's Foreign Language Publishing House and Peking's Foreign Language Press have put out carefully documented books on the U.S. drawn either from exclusively unfavorable impressions of Communists, visiting the country, or else from one-sided selections of statements from the U.S. press or public figures, all of which are highly critical of the U.S. (In Russia 12 prominent Soviet visitors published a scathing report, "Face to Face With

America," while visitors from the U.S.S.R.'s Writers' Union published a similar unfavorable report in their official organ, "The Banner." These reports, plus kindred others, "prove" to Soviet citizens that the U.S. is what they always knew it to be: a "decadent imperialist power.")

Thus, the Soviet leaders are utilizing cultural exchange to defraud and deceive the American people with pretensions of friendship and goodwill, all of which are absolutely contrary to the oft-expressed ultimate Soviet design to communize America and the world.

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